

**Writing About Literature—Unit 1**  
**Analyze Literary Periods: Integrating Grammar Skills**

**Replacing Unclear Pronouns**

The noun or group of words to which a pronoun refers is called the pronoun's **antecedent**. To avoid confusion when writing, make sure that every pronoun you use clearly refers to one specific antecedent. If the antecedent is not clear, you may need to replace the pronoun with a noun or rewrite the sentence to avoid the problem.

**Unclear:** The American frontier was a difficult place to live. *It* required courage and determination. (What required courage and determination?)

**Clear:** The American frontier was a difficult place to live. *Survival on the frontier* required courage and determination.

**Identifying Unclear Pronouns**

**A. DIRECTIONS:** For each item, circle the pronoun and underline its antecedent. Then, on the lines provided, indicate whether the antecedent to which each pronoun refers is clear or unclear.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The settlers of Jamestown faced disease and starvation. Despite them, the colony survived.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The first European settlers were curious about the Native Americans. They did not realize that they had rich cultural traditions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Some Native Americans welcomed European settlers and taught them important survival skills.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The Puritans believed that their government was guided by God; it is a theocracy.

**Fixing Unclear Antecedents**

**B. DIRECTIONS:** Rewrite these sentences so that the antecedent of each pronoun is clear.

1. Settlers in the Southern Colonies owned plantations, and they were very large.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. The lifestyles of Southern plantation owners were busy, sociable, and elegant, which New England was not.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Most literature written by the Puritans was religious, because it dominated their lives.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. John Smith described his experiences with Powhatan and with his daughter, Pocahontas.  
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